

Senate District 11

Friday, November 9, 2007

The Honorable Rick Perry
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Dear Governor Perry:

I know you share my outrage at the snail's pace of state aid for Texas families more than two years after Hurricane Rita came ashore with such force. The recent State Auditor's report finds that of nearly 4,300 applications for federal assistance controlled by your administration, only 13 have been helped.

This letter is to ask you to take immediate steps to break the logjam that has kept all but a mere two percent of available aid from getting to the families who need it most.

It is outrageous that these taxpaying citizens – these Texans! – should be victimized twice – first by the storm, then again by the state bureaucracy.

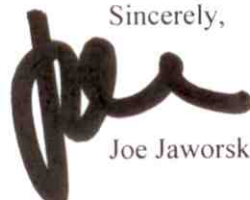
The State Auditor's report makes clear that the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs has been too cautious in providing relief to the storm's victims but thrown caution to the wind when it comes to privatizing relief effort, including a multi-million dollar contract with a private firm whose top lobbyist is your former chief of staff.

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs has also squandered more than \$230,000 in hurricane relief on administrative expenses, according the State Auditor's report. That's one-fifth of what has been spent thus far—a ratio that would make Halliburton blush.

I urge you to make sure that Texans who applied for aid receive initial payments to get things going. The state can then provide additional funds based on a more thorough approval process. This plan will guarantee immediate help while allowing for safeguards to protect taxpayers against fraud or abuse.

As a Galveston city councilman in 2005, I helped lead the efforts to prepare for Hurricane Rita's arrival. Had the storm not turned east at the last minute, our region would have been devastated. Even though we avoided the brunt of the hurricane, thousands in our area suffered property and infrastructure damage. They deserve help – now.

Sincerely,



Joe Jaworski